A DISCOURSE OF THE RELIGION OF ENGLAND.

ASSERTING,

That REFORMED CHRISTIANITY setled in its Due Latitude, is the Stability and Advancement of this KINGDOM.

< By John Corbet ?

LONDON, Printed in the Year M. DC. LX. VII.

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THE PREFACE.

RElegion being deeply imprinted in Humane Nature, and having a great Power over it, and being more notably displayed in the present Age, is become the Grand Interest of *States*, and almost of all men; though not after the same manner, nor upon the same Grounds and Motives. For this cause, whether it comes in Truth, or in Shew only, it is found to rule and turn about the great Affairs of the World. And though many things of different nature, may have great influence on the State of this Kingdom, yet *Religion* and *Matters of Conscience* evi-

evidently appear to have the greateſt. The diſtinguiſhing of Perſons for the favour or diſfavour of the Times; yea, the very Names of Diſcrimination paſs upon the account of *Religious Differences*. The Active part of all ſorts and ranks of men, is hereby chiefly ſwayed in their Motions; and their Affections move more importunately in this One, then in all their other Concernments. Wherefore if a Settlement may be found out, which may accommodate all thoſe Parties or Perſwaſions, in which the Peace of the Nation is bound up, it will prove the undoubted Intereſt of this State. And if ſuch a Settlement be likewiſe found to be the true and ſound ſtate of Religion, it muſt needs be acceptable to the faithful Servants of Chriſt, and the true Lovers of their Country.

Now the Adventure of this Diſcourſe

is to Assert, *That Reformed Christianity rightly stated, and setled in its due Latitude, is the Stability and Advancement of the Kingdom of* England. Nothing is here suggested for Politick Ends, to corrupt the Purity, or enervate the Power of Religion, or to lessen Charity; but the Fatherly Compassion of Rulers, and the mutual Brotherly Condescention of all Christians, required by the Law of Christ, and some Connivence in case of insuperable Necessities, and that for the Truth's sake, is here propounded. *Episcopacy* is not undermined, nor any other Form of Government here insinuated; only a Relaxation of the Prescribed Uniformity, and some Indulgence to Dissenters of Sound Faith, and Good Life, is submissively offered to the Consideration of our Superiors. All Pragmatical Arrogance, presuming to give Rules to Gover-

vernours, and to teach them what to do, is carefully avoided; only the Possibility, Expediency, and Necessity of Moderation, is represented. And it is humbly desired, That this Honest Intention in pursuance of Peace, may find a favourable Reception.

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The Contents.

SECT. 1. *The Religion of this Realm, and Three different parties of most important consideration,* The Protestants *of the Church of* England, *the* Protestant Nonconformists, *and the* Papists.

Sect. 2. *The Behaviour and Pretension of the Popish Party in these times.*

Sect. 3. *That* Popery *disposeth Subjects to Rebellion.*

Sect. 4. *That it persecutes all other Religions within its reach.*

Sect. 5. *That wheresoever it finds Encouragement, it is restless, till it bears down all before it, or hath put all in disorder.*

Sect. 6. *The Papists Pretension of Loyalty and Merit in the Kings Cause, examined.*

Sect. 7. *The result of the whole Discourse touching the* Popish *Party.*

Sect. 8. *That the Reformed Religion makes good Christians, and good Subjects.*

Sect. 9. *The Reformed Religion is the permanent Interest of this Kingdom.*

Sect. 10. *It is for the behoof of Religion and true Piety, and for the Interest of this State, That Reformed Christianity be setled in its full Extent.*

Sect. 11. *How momentous in the Ballance of the Nation those Protestants are, that dissent from the present Ecclesiastical Polity.*

Sect. 12. *The Extirpation of the Dissenters is both difficult and unprofitable.*

Sect. 13. *The Representation of this Difficulty is no threatning to Rulers, or intimation of Rebellion.*

Sect.

Sect. 14. *The setling of the Nation by an Established Order, a Toleration, and a Connivence.*
Sect. 15. *Of the Established Order in Religion, and the Moderation therein required.*
Sect. 16. *Whether the Dissenters are capable of being brought into such a Comprehension.*
Sect. 17. *Acquiescence in the widened Establishment, is the safety of Religion.*
Sect. 18. *Of Toleration and Connivence.*
Sect. 19. *Dissenters of narrow and rigid Principles, advised to Moderation.*
Sect. 20. *This comprehensive state of Religion, further considered, with respect to Three Important Interests: First, To that of the King.*
Sect. 21. *Secondly, To the Interest of the Church and Clergy.*
Sect. 22. *Thirdly, To the Interest of the Nobility and Gentry.*
Sect. 23. *The general Security that comes by this Latitude.*

ERRATA.

Page 9. line 2. read *in King* James *his time.* p. 5. l. 18. r. *Arts of Rome.* p. 31. l. 31. r. *exacted.*

A DISCOURSE OF THE RELIGION of *ENGLAND*.

SECT. I.

The Religion of this Realm; and three different Parties of most important consideration; The Protestants *of the Church of* England, *the* Protestant Nonconformists, *and the* Papists.

THE Religion of *England* considered, not only as established by Law, but as rooted in the Nation, and generally embraced, is that which is called *Protestant*, and is no other then Christianity recovered out of the Antichristian Apostacy, and reformed from the Corruptions of later Ages, after the Primitive Purity; receiving the holy Scriptures as the perfect Rule of Christian Faith and Life.

Howbeit, in this Realm there be three different Parties of most important consideration: The first consists of those Protestants that zealously adhere to the English Ecclesiastical Polity, and call themselves the *Church of England*. The

second sort is of those Protestants that receive the Doctrine of Faith contained in the Articles of Religion, but are dissatisfied in the form of Ecclesiastical Polity. These by their Adversaries have been usually called *Puritans*. The third is of those that utterly reject the Reformation, and remain united to the Pope as their Spiritual Head, and call themselves *Roman-Catholicks*.

Hereupon an impartial serious Observer, respecting the Common Good, may be induced to make inquiry, How agreeable or dis-harmonious each of these Three are to the Publick Weal; as also, What proportion they bear to each other; and whether those under the Legal Establishment, or the Dissenters, preponderate in the Ballance of the Nation; or whether the Established preponderate in that degree which is requisite in true reason of Government.

SECT. II.

The Behaviour and Pretensions of the POPISH *Party in these Times.*

THE *Roman-Catholicks* in *England*, considered not barely in their Number, but in their Rank and Quality, being Rich and Powerful, and Strong in Alliances, are very momentous, and seem to be capable of great Designs, especially in conjunction with Foreign Interests.

In these times they have taken much Liberty and Boldness, with an undisturbed Security, and lately have been observed to be more then ordinarily active, jocund and confident of the effect of their Mutual Correspondencies; and manifold passages of dangerous appearance have been every where spoken of; in so much that the Nation hath taken an Alarm, and the PARLIAMENT judged the Matter worthy of their Search, and appointed a Committee to receive Informations.

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This Party hath high pretensions of Merit towards the King, and all that are called *Royallists*; and they seek apparently more then Indulgence and Safety, even High Power and Trust, as if they were the true and sure Confidents of this State. Such Claims as these, challenge a serious Debate. For a Charge of a high nature (as themselves have taken notice) hath been of a long time prosecuted against Popery, viz. *That it disposeth Subjects to Rebellion. That it persecutes all other Religions within its reach. That wheresoever it finds incouragement, it is restless, till it bear down all, or hath put all in Disorder.* Till they make a better Defence then the world hath yet seen, we take the just liberty of insisting upon this Charge, and examining first, How benign or safe the influence of Popery is upon any State or Kingdom whatsoever; and then how it doth comport with the State of *England*, whose Basis is the Protestant Religion, setled by Law, and by length of time generally spred, and deeply rooted in the Nation, and solemnly and constantly avowed by Prince and People.

SECT. III.

That POPERY disposeth Subjects to Rebellion.

WHat hath been the constant practice of the Popes, who are the Head of the *Roman* Faith, the Universal consent of History bears record. What continual thundering of Excommunications hath sounded throughout the Christian world in all Ages, since the beginning of the Papal Reign, against Kings, Emperors, and other Princes and States that presumed to dispute their Dictates, or cross their Designs, to the loosing of Subjects from the Bonds of Allegiance, and the deposing of Soveraigns? What unexampled Abasements hath the Imperial Majesty suffered in the Persons of sundry Emperors, by prodigious

digious instances of Papal Pride; which, though enough to stir up the indignation of mankind, are applauded by famous Writers, Champions of the Court of *Rome?* The Popes Temporal Dominions began and grew up in Rebellion and Usurpation, for which cause they have nourished Factions, and filled the world with Warrs and Tumults, and maintained most outragious and tedious Conflicts with many Emperors, even till they had crippled and broke the back of the Empire it self.

And these practices are justified by their Decretals and Canons, and Divines of greatest Authority, and some of their Councils, ascribing to the Pope a Power of Deposing Princes that are Heretical, or favourers of Hereticks. The Jesuits Doctrine of KING-KILLING, hath made them odious; and if some passages can be alledged out of their Writings against taking away the Lives of Princes, their declared meaning is, That a King deposed by the Pope, becomes *Tirannus titulo*, and is no more a Lawful King, and then what follows, is easily understood. Those of the Church of *Rome* that disavow these things, should mind their contradiction to the Faith they own, in leaving their Popes, Divines and Canonists in a point of such importance. But how potent the influence of the Court of *Rome*, and the Agency of the Jesuits is for the diffusing of those Principles into the most and chiefest of the *Roman-Catholicks*, is not unknown.

If the undisturbed Government of the Emperor, and of the King of *Spain* in later times, be brought forth as an instance of the Loyalty of Popish Subjects, or an argument of the soundness of Popish Principles; it must be considered, That the House of *Austria* have made their devotion to the See of *Rome*, their grand and appropriate Interest, and that See hath a main dependance on those Princes; and both it and they have the same active Votaries

throughout Christendom, the Jesuits and their Adherents. As for the Kingdom of *France*, the State of *Venice*, and others acknowledging the Popes Headship, they have had enough to do, and they would have more, if either themselves were weak, and less formidable to the Pope, or the Popes lightning and thunder were now as dreadful as in former Ages. Even in Popish Countreys the abuses of Papal Power, and the Intrigues and Interests of the Court of *Rome* are a little better discerned; therefore those Princes and States can make the better terms for themselves; yet if either the former degree of ignorance and stupid devotion to that See, shall return upon their people, or the like occasions of embroiling or breaking States, shall revive, they must accept the Popes conditions, and submit to the former yoke.

But if the Princes of that Profession can in this our more knowing Age, with much ado hold their Subjects in obedience, against the Acts of *Rome*; yet the question concerning *England* remains intire, Whether a Protestant Prince can with good reason confide or repose himself in the Loyalty of his Popish Subjects? and more especially, Whether the fore-mentioned Popish Claims do in any wise comport with the State of *England*, whose Basis is the Protestant Religion?

No other Religion gives the Priests such an Empire over the Conscience, as the Popish doth. The Principles of that Belief, and the Order and Frame of that Church, are directed to this end, and the people are miserably inthralled to the will of their Clergy: By Auricular Confession the Priests have a constant inlet into the hearts of men, by injoyning Penances and works of Devotion, they exercise a spiritual Dominion over them. Hereby they have dayly opportunity, and advantage enough to excite them to any notable Exploits for the Catholick Cause; unto which kind

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of services they fix an Opinion of the highest Merit, either for discharge from the pains of Purgatory, or for the acquest of a greater Reward in Glory: Yea, dissolute persons may be easily drawn to such Attempts, in hope of making compensation for a loose and lewd life; and when they suffer for Sedition or Treason, they are held to acquire the glory of Martyrs and Confessors. Add hereunto their Belluine hatred of Hereticks, and vile esteem of their persons: And in all this, their Church's supposed Infallibility warrants this blind obedience, and brutish confidence. And to make void all the security that can be given between Prince and people, the Pope under pretence of Equity and Necessity, undertakes to dispence with Oaths, and with all Laws both Civil and Divine. Besides all this, there is the Jesuits peculiar Discipline, most exquisite for blind obedience and resolution, and consequently, for any great and strange Attempts.

Things past may afford prognosticks of thing to come. May *Englands* constant Experience be taken for Evidence in the case*. The Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, after the Protestant Reformation had gotten the stated possession of this Kingdom, was infested with a continued succession and series of Treasons, for the re-introducing of Popery, carried on by the English *Papists* with an indefatigable and implacable Spirit, proceeding from Causes peculiar to that Religion.

* In the Reign of *Edward* the sixth, a formidable Rebellion was raised for recovery of the Mass.

During the first ten years, they conformed to the Church of *England*; but afterwards, to testifie their union with the *Pope*, they became a divided party in this State. For then the Queen being found unmoveable, the *Pope* published his Declaratory Sentence against Her, by which all Her Subjects were absolved from the Oath of Allegiance, and

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an *Anathema* denounced against those that thence forth obey Her. The Popish Rebellion in the North breaks out. Many horrid attempts of Violence upon Her Majesties Person, were plotted one after another for many years together, as that of Dr. *Story*, of *Parry*, of *Arden* and *Somervile*, of *Throgmorton*, of *Babington* and his Complices, besides the concurrent Commotion in *Ireland**. In these several Treasons, many of the Seminary Priests were forward and active. The great and setled Design, was the advancing of the Queen of *Scots*, to the Crown of *England*; wherein were ingaged the Pope, and *Spaniard*, and *French* King, and Duke of *Guise*, in conjunction with the *English Papists*, making use of her Title to set on foot those many desperate Enterprises against the Queen.

* Dr. *Parry* confessed, that having promised at *Rome* to kill the Queen, he was troubled in Conscience about it, till he had read Dr. *Allen*'s Book, which taught, That Princes excommunicate for Heresie, were to be deprived of Kingdom and Life; which Book, he said, did vehemently excite him to prosecute his Enterprise.

After the death of the Queen of *Scots*, they raised a new Title to the Crown in the House of *Spain*. The memory of Eighty Eight, will be an everlasting Monument of Papistical Cruelty and Treason. Cardinal *Allen* the first founder or procurer of the Foreign Seminaries, a person admired as well by the Secular Priests, as Jesuits, penned a Treatise with all the Rhetorick he had, to excite the *English* Catholicks to joyn with the *Spaniards*. Among the Forces in the *Low-Countries* prepared for this Invasion, were seven hundred *English* Fugitives. After the *Spanish* Armado was dissipated, the Jesuits had not done. They would have stirred up the Earl of *Derby* to assume the Title of the Kingdom; they plotted the poysoning of the Queen by *Lopez* her Physician; they excited Villains to dispatch her by bloody hands, and they never left soliciting the King of *Spain*, till he twice attempted another Invasion. In those times

times *Parsons* his Book of Titles was famous, wherein he set up divers Competitors for the Crown, preferring the Infanta before all others, and slighting King *James* his Title, as having but few Favourers, and little accounted by Catholicks.

The *Roman* party could be provoked to these mischiefs by no other impulse then the impetuous zeal of their Superstition. Some of their own did then publish to the world their important Considerations, to move all true Catholicks to acknowledg, That the proceedings of Her Majesty and the State, with them, since the beginning of Her Reign, had been mild and merciful. In the several times of those mischievous designments, though some priests were executed, yet those that were found moderate in their Examinations, obtained Mercy, and a great number of them that by Law were obnoxious to death, were spared from that extremity, and only banished. It is true, that certain Secular priests did impute all those Treasons to the Jesuits and their Adherents, and fully charged them with all the aforesaid matters of Fact, in terms of highest aggravation, acquitting all other Catholicks. But it must be noted, that the Jesuits were in greatest reputation, and had the predominant influence upon the *English Papists* in general, and (as appears by the Seculars loud Complaints) had such a power of disposing the Alms collected for their prisoners, and other sufferers, that such as complied not with their purposes, were debarr'd of relief, and pined for want. And by their counsels, the Foreign Seminaries, those Nurseries of Disloyalty were wholly swayed. And 'tis observable, That the agrieved Seculars never published their pretended abhorrency of these Treasons, till they were over-past, and themselves, being driven to despair by the Jesuits potency, were forced to take shelter under a great Prelate of the Church of *England*.

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The same Spirit of Disloyalty was as active and vigorous in that Kings time, who at his first entrance, found himself excluded from Title to the Crown, by two Papal Breves, the ground-work of that Infernal Plot of matchless Villany and Cruelty, the *GUNPOWDER-TREASON*. After the defeat of which horrid Conspiracy, the Projects of *Rome* proceeded not in such down-right Rebellions, which always miscarried; but in ways more secretly undermining Religion, and as truly destructive to the Interest of King and Kingdom.

SECT. IV.

That it Persecutes all other Religions within its reach.

THE second Branch of the Charge against *Popery*, is, *That it persecutes all other Religions within its reach.* In the Church of *Rome*, for many by-past Ages, the Meekness of Christ, and the Dove-like nature of his Spouse hath not appeared, but the Cruelty of that great Whore that was drunken with the Blood of the Saints, and of the Martyrs of Jesus. All that cast off her yoke, and disown her pretended Infallibility, are with her no better then Hereticks, though they intirely own all the Articles of the Christian Faith received by the ancient Church. And Hereticks are esteemed more vile then dogs; and it is held meritorious to abuse and torment them. Her Laws have made their punishment to be the sharpest kind of death, Burning alive inexorably inflicted. By this *Romish* Wrath and Fury were Three hundred Martyrs sacrificed in Queen *Maries* time, for not believing the Sacramental Bread to be turned into the Substance of Christs Body, against the most clear and distinct perception and reason of all Mankind.

But can humane Nature hear, without horror, the report of that direful Consistory, called the *Holy Inquisition*, esta-

bliſhed in thoſe Countries where *Popery* is in full ſway. Doubtleſs that Church whoſe Religious Orders in a ſolemn and Sacred Judicatory, ſhall commit ſuch horrid Outrages as are indeed acted by thoſe Infernal Judges, upon pretence of Juſtice and Piety, muſt needs be a School of Univerſal Cruelty for all her Adherents.

The *Popiſh* hath outgone the *Pagan Cruelty*. What Treachery and Villany hath been acted! What barbarous Indignities have been offered in ways as immodeſt and ſhameleſs, as outragious and mercileſs, upon pretence of zeal againſt Hereticks! What varieties of ſtrangely-deviſed Torments have been inflicted upon the Servants of Chriſt, without ſparing Age, Sex, or Condition! Nor hath ſuch work been done onely in our Age or Country, but in all Ages ſucceſſively, and Countries univerſally, that were imbued with *Romiſh* Principles: Witneſs the huge ſlaughters of the *Waldenſes*, the perſecutions of the *Bohemian* Brethren, and of many others throughout Chriſtendom in the former Ages: And ſince *Proteſtant-Reformation*, how have the *Romiſh Zealots* filled *Europe* with the ſlaughters of Chriſtians within their reach, in *France*, *Germany*, *Spain*, *Italy*, *England*, *Scotland*, the *Netherlands*. In *Ireland*, *Piedmont* and *Poland*, their Cruelty is freſh in memory. And the ſlain cannot be numbred for multitude; they were killed by Thouſands, Ten thouſands, Hundred thouſands, at one and the ſame Perſecution. And the Tragedies have been acted where the Name of *Proteſtant* was well known, yea, where Proteſtants were under the ſhelter of the Law. For the Jeſuits unceſſantly ſtir up the Princes to fall upon their people againſt Law, and without provocation given, and after things have been ſetled, to break their Agreements with them. And the Pope himſelf is the Contriver or Applauder of theſe Miſchiefs, and the ſucceſful execution thereof, is received at *Rome* with joy and triumph, as the Murtherers

therers in the *Parisian* Massacre were highly extolled by the Pope, and rewarded with such spiritual Graces as his Holiness useth to bestow.

SECT. V.

That whereſoever it finds Encouragement, it is reſtleſs, till it bears down all before it, or hath put all in diſorder.

MAy we judg by these things, how a Party devoted to the See of *Rome*, are to be trusted and cherished in a Protestant Nation, who mind the securing of themselves and their posterity, from the sharpest Persecutions; especially considering the Third Branch of the Charge, *That in any State, where they find advantage, or fit matter to work upon, they are reſtleſs, till they bear down all, or put all in diſorder.*

Popery hath its formed Combinations, and setled Correspondencies over all Christendom, under the Supreme Direction and Government of the Congregation at *Rome*, for the propagation of the Faith; which sent over swarms of *Seminary Prieſts*, *Jeſuits*, and *Fryars* of all sorts, who made their Hives in *England*.

The several *PARLIAMENTS* of the later times of King *James*, represented to the King how the *Popiſh Recuſants* had dangerously increased their Numbers and Insolencies, having great expectation from the *Treaties* with *Spain*, and the interposing of *Foreign Princes* for Indulgence to them; how they openly and usually resorted to the Churches and Chappels of *Foreign Ambaſſadors*, their more then usual concourse to the City, and their frequent Conventicles and Conferences there; how their children were educated in many Foreign *Seminaries* appropriated to the *Engliſh* Fugitives; what swarms of Priests and Jesuits came into the Land; many Popish and Seditious Books licentiously

printed and dispersed. From which Causes, as from bitter Roots, most dangerous Effects both to Church and State would follow. For the Popish Religion is incompatible with ours; it draws with it an unavoidable dependance upon Forcign Princes; it opens a wide gap for popularity in any who shall draw too great a party; it hath a restless spirit, and will strive by these gradations. If it once get connivance, it will press for Toleration; if that should be obtained, it must have an Equality; from thence it will aspire to a Superiority, and never rest till it hath wrought the subversion of true Religion.

In the several *PARLIAMENTS* of King *Charles* the First, not one *Publick Grievance* was more insisted on, then the *Growth of POPERY*. In the Third PARLIAMENT of that King, at a Conference between the Lords and Commons about *Popish Recusants*, one of the Principal Secretaries of State spake thus: "Give me leave to tell "you what I know, That These now both vaunt at home, "and write to their Friends abroad, they hope all will "be well, and doubt not to prevail, and win ground upon "us: And a little to awaken the Care and Zeal of our "Learned and Grave Fathers, it is fit that they take notice "of that Hierarchy, which is already Established in com-"petition with their Lordships: For they have already a "Bishop consecrated by the Pope. This Bishop hath his "subalternate Officers of all kinds; as *Vicars General*, "*Arch-Deacons*, *Rural Deans*, *Apparitors*, and such like; "neither are these nominal and titular Officers alone, but "they all execute their Jurisdiction, and make their ordina-"ry Visitation throughout the Kingdom, keep Courts, and "determine Ecclesiastical Causes; and, which is an argu-"ment of more consequence, they keep ordinary intelli-"gence by their Agents at *Rome*, and hold correspondencies "with the Nuncio's and Cardinals both at *Bruxels*, and in

France.

"*France*. Neither are the Seculars alone grown to this "height, but the Regulars are more active and dangerous, "and have taken deep root. They have already planted "their Societies and Colledges of both Sexes. They have "setled Revenues, Houses, Libraries, Vestments, and all "other necessary provisions to travel, or stay at home; nay, "even at this time they intend to hold a concurrent Assem-"bly with this Parliament.

In *Ireland* a *Popish Clergy* far more numerous then the *Protestant*, was in full exercise of all *Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction*, by *Arch-Bishops*, *Bishops*, *Vicars*, *General Officiats*, and a *Vicar Apostolical*. And they had a special *Cardinal* at *Rome* for their Protector.

Among other Projects, a Consultation and Overture of reconciling *England* and *Rome*, was set on foot. Some of Eminency in the Church of *England*, gave advantage to the Project, by declaring, That only the *Puritans* among the *Protestants*, and the *Jesuits* among the *Papists*, obstructed the Peace of *Christendom*. Some prime Agent of the Pope, made a solemn offer of a Cardinalship to Bishop *Laud*, at the time of his translation to the See of *Canterbury*. *Sancta Clara* presumed to dedicate his Book to the King, wherein the *Articles* of the Church of *England* were examined by the *Roman Standard*, and distorted to the sense of the Council of *Trent*. The Pope had Three Nuncio's, *Panzani*, *Con*, and *Roseti*, successively residing in *England*, to work upon this State by advantage of the Project of *Reconciliation*.

This Faction had many Irons in the Fire, and many strings to their Bow. They had their Agents in Court, City and Country. They had their Spyes in the Houses of great men, and such as kept continual watch over them that had the chief sway of Publick Affairs. Their work was to raise and foster Jealousies between the King and His Peo-

ple,

ple, to cast things into the hurry of Faction, Prejudice and confused Motion. And whether the Court or Popular Faction prevailed, they thought it equally advantagious to their Designs, which was to unsettle the present State, and work Mutations. Such *Incendiaries* are the *Factors* of *Rome*, and such busie *Engineers* in the Confusions of *Christendom*. Can any that considers the foregoing passages, doubt of the powerful and special Agency of the Court of *Rome*, in the Commotions that followed. A *Venetian* Agent in *England*, intimate with Nuncio *Panzani*, and privy to all his Negotiations, made this Observation; *If one may make judgment of things future, by things past, this Realm so divided into many Factions in matter of Religion, and that of the Catholick increasing daily, will in time be troubled and torn with Civil Warrs.*

SECT. VI.

The PAPISTS pretension of Loyalty and Merit in the King's Cause, Examined.

THE great Plea and boasting of the *Romanists*, is, *Their pretension of Merit in the King's Cause.* The truth is, the *Papists* knew that the PARLIAMENT was fully bent, and deeply engaged against them; and therefore despaired of any good to themselves by a direct and open compliance with them, whatever undiscerned influence they might have on their Counsels: So that Necessity made them to serve the King in that Warr. And they brought neither Success nor Reputation to His Majesties Affairs; nor did He care to own their Assistance more then as justified by the present necessity. And they have little reason to upbraid the *Protestants* with the scandal of that Warr; for whatsoever was alledged in defence thereof, by the PARLIAMENT and their Adherents, as much hath

hath been written by very Eminent School-men and Doctors of the *Roman* Church, for the Interest of the people, and the Consent of the Cities and the Peers in Defensive Arms. Which they have written over and above their peculiar Principle of the Popes Universal Power of Deposing Kings that are unfit for Government.

As for the woful Catastrophe of those Commotions, it hath been manifested to the world by such as undertook to justifie it, when Authority should require: *That the year before the Kings death, a select number of Jesuits being sent from their whole Party in* England, *consulted both the* Faculty *of* Sorbon, *and the* Conclave *at* Rome, *touching the Lawfulness and Expediency of promoting the* Change of Government, *by* making away the King, *whom they despaired to turn from his Heresie: It was debated and concluded in both places, That for the Advancement of the Catholick Cause, it was Lawful and Expedient to carry on that Alteration of State.* This Determination was effectually pursued by many Jesuits that came over, and acted their parts in several Disguises. After that execrable Fact was perpetrated on the Person of our Soveraign, if we may believe most credible reports, there were many Witnesses of the great joy among the *English Convents* and *Seminaries*, and other companies of Papists beyond Sea, as having overcome their great Enemy, and done their main work.

Many of their Chief ones sought the favour of the Usurpers, with offers of doing them service. One of great note among them, in a Book entituled, *Grounds of Obedience and Government*, undertook the solution of the Grand Case of those Times: *That if a People be dissolved into the State of* Anarchy, *their Promise made to their expelled Governour, binds no more; they are remitted to the force of Nature to provide for themselves. That the old Magistrates*

giſtrates Right, ſtands upon the Common Peace, and that is transferred to his Rival, by the Title of Quiet Poſſeſſion. Conformably to theſe Principles, they addreſs their Petition, *To the Supream Authority, the PARLIAMENT of the Commonwealth of* England. They affirmed, *They had generally taken, and punctually kept the* Engagement; and promiſed, *That if they might enjoy their Religion, they would be the moſt quiet and uſeful Subjects.*

Of their Actings ſince His Majeſties Reſtauration, and the Jealouſies and Rumours about them, let men judg as they find by the Evidences that are given.

SECT. VII.

The Reſult of the whole Diſcourſe touching the Popiſh Party.

AND now let it be duly weighed, Whether the Papiſts of theſe Dominions have in later times changed their former Principles and Intereſts, or have only taken another method of greater Artifice and Subtilty, as the change of times hath given them direction and advantage. The ſcope of the whole preceding Diſcourſe, is to call in queſtion thoſe high pretenſions of theirs, and to croſs their Aims at great Power and Truſt: But it is not directed againſt the Security of their Perſons or Fortunes, or any meet Indulgence or Clemency towards them. Let them have their Faith to themſelves, without being vexed with ſnares, or any afflicted; the State always providing to obviate the forementioned Principles and Practices of Diſloyalty, and the diffuſing of the leaven of their Superſtition. The Inference of the whole is this, That they be not admitted to a capacity of evil and dangerous influence upon the Affairs of the Kingdom, or of interrupting and perplexing the courſe of things that concern the publike.

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

That the Reformed Religion makes good Christians, and good Subjects.

AS true Religion is the most Noble End, so it is the best Foundation of all Political Government. And it is the felicity of the State of *England*, to rest upon this Basis, even Reformed Christianity, or the Primitive and Apostolick Religion recovered out of the Apostacy of the later times, and severed from that new kind of *Paganism*, or *Pagano-Christianism*, under which it lay much oppressed and overwhelmed, but not extinguished. Its wholsome Doctrine contained in its publick Confessions, makes *good Christians*, and *good Subjects*. It teacheth obedience to Civil Magistrates, without the controle of any Superior or Collateral Power. Nor is it concerned, if dangerous Positions fall from the Pens of some Writers. And notwithstanding the Adversaries Cavils, the Divines of Authority and solid Reputation in the Protestant Churches, do with a general Consent maintain the Rights of Princes and Soveraign Powers, against all Disobedience. If any aberration in Practice, hath been found in its Professors, it is not to be charged therewith, because it condemns it; but the general practice in this point, hath been conformable to the Doctrine.

The Reformation in *England*, for its Legality and Orderlines, is unquestionable. In *Germany* it was setled and defended by Princes and free Cities, that governed their own Signiories and Territories, paying only a respect of Homage to the Emperor. In *Helvetia* it began by the Senates of the *Cantons*. It was received in *Geneva* by that Republick, after the Civil Government had been reformed by strong Papists. In the Provinces of the *Netherlands* it

was spread many years before the Union against the *Spaniard*; which Union was not made upon the score of *Religion*, but of *State*. The manner of its beginning in *Scotland*, is by some attributed to a National Disposition, the asperity and vehemency thereof, is said to be greater in times of *Popery*, and to be much mitigated by the *Reformation*. For *France*, we may take the Testimony of King *JAMES*, who was jealous enough for the Power of Kings. He said, That *he never knew yet, that the* French Protestants *took Arms against their King*. In the first Troubles, they stood only upon their Defence; before they took Arms, they were burned and Massacred every where. The first Quarrel did not begin for Religion, but because when King *Francis* the Second was under Age, they had been the refuge of the Princes of the Blood expelled from the Court, who knew not else where to take Sanctuary; and that it shall not be found that they made any other Warr.

It is not for this Discourse to intermeddle with all the Actions of Protestant Subjects towards their Princes, that have happened in Christendom: Let them stand or fall by the Laws and Polity under which they live. Whensoever they have been disloyal, they have swerved from the known and received Rules of their Profession. Through the corruption of Mankind, Subjects of whatsoever perswasion, are prone to Murmurings and Mutinies. Sometimes Oppression makes them mad. Sometimes a Jealousie of Incroachments upon their Legal Rights and Liberties, raiseth Distempers and Contests. And sometimes an unbridled, wanton affecting of inordinate Liberty, makes them insolent and licentious. But over and above these common Sources of Rebellion, Popery hath a peculiar one, and that of the greatest Force, the Conscience of Religious Obligations, and the Zeal of the Catholick Faith. Protestants have never disowned their King for difference

ference in Religion, as the most of the *Roman Catholicks* of *France* dealt with *Henry* the Fourth, by the Popes instigation. And in their greatest Enormities, they have never attempted the Stabbing and Poysoning of Princes that stood in their way, which the Jesuits teach their Disciples.

SECT. IX.

The Reformed Religion is the permanent Interest of this Kingdom.

AS the Protestant or Reformed Religion, is the true Primitive Christianity, so it is the stable and permanent Interest of *England*, and the sure Foundation of its Prosperity. The King of *England* is the most Mighty Prince of this Profession, and becomes the more Potent over Christendom, by being the Head and Chief of the whole Protestant Party. And it is well known, That by the Support and Defence of this Cause, the Nation hath encreased in Honour, and Wealth, and Power.

The Peoples rooted Averseness from Popery, is most apparent, and their Jealousies work upon any more then usual Insolence or Confidence of the Papists. The *Royallists* as well as others, have been Allarm'd, and manifested their Zeal against it. And His Majesties Averseness from it, is so fully declared by His Constancy amidst Temptations, in the time of His Exile, and now since His Return, that for His Honours sake, it is made very penal for any to suggest that He would introduce it; the Law presuming, That such suggestion must needs proceed from an evil mind.

And what Prince that hath cast off the Popes yoke, would willingly come under it again? A Foreign Statesman of the *Roman* Profession, hath observed it as a Barr

againſt the projected Reconciliation between *England* and *Rome*, That it could not be effected without Conceſſions on both ſides, contrary to the Maxims of both parties. *This Realm* (ſaith he) *is perverſly addicted to maintain its own reſolute Opinion of Excluding the Popes Authority. And the Court of* Rome *is more ſollicitous to remove whatſoever is contrary to its Temporal Grandure, then to extirpate ſuch Hereſies as this Realm is infected with.* To inſtance in that one point of the Approbation or Toleration of the Oath of Allegiance; though ſome Catholick Doctors had with their Tongues and Pens maintained the lawfulneſs of that Oath; yet thereby, and by opening ſome other points of high conſequence, they had ſo diſpleaſed the Pope, that could they have been catch't, they were ſure to have been burn'd or ſtrangled for it. But what allurement is there to diſpoſe the Monarchs of the Earth to ſubject themſelves to the Sacerdotal Empire of *Rome*, or to endeavour an Accommodation with it? Hath Popery its advantages to diſpoſe Subjects to ſecurity and blind obedience? So it hath its advantages to looſen the Bonds of Allegiance, and foment Rebellion in Subjects; when Proteſtancy ſeaſons them with principles of unſtained Loyalty. A people muzled in ignorance and ſuperſtition, are more eaſily ſeduced from their obedience to Magiſtrates, and carried headlong by thoſe that have dominion over their Conſciences. But Underſtanding and Knowledg makes men conſiderate, and more eaſily manageable by a juſt and prudent Government.

As for the Clergy's Intereſt, though the Proteſtant Religion doth not affect that exceſſive Pomp and Splendor of Church-men, which the Popiſh doth; yet it is taken for granted, That neither Conſcience nor Intereſt will permit the Biſhops and Clergy of *England*, to unite to the See of *Rome*. Their Doctrine is too pure, and their Judgment too

clear

clear for a full compliance with Popery: And they know what it is to come under the Papal Yoke, to diveſt themſelves, and receive new Orders from *Rome*, and to be diſplaced and ſet behind the *Veteran* Soldiers of the *Roman* Camp, whoſe turns muſt be firſt ſerved.

SECT. X.

It is for the behoof of Religion and true Piety, and for the Intereſt of this State, That Reformed Chriſtianity be ſetled in its full Extent.

IF it be reſolved, *That Proteſtancy is the truth of Chriſtianity*, and alſo, *the ſtability of England*; it follows, That this Profeſſion muſt not be ſtreightned and leſſened, but inlarged and cheriſhed, according to its true Extent; and the Rule and Square of the Eccleſiaſtical State, muſt be commenſurate thereunto. It ſhould be the meaſure of all mens Zeal and Activity in Rites and Opinions, whatſoever is neceſſary to its ſupport and advancement, is conſtantly to be aſſerted; and about things impertinent thereunto, contention ſhould utterly ceaſe. This is to advance the Kingdom of God among men, and to encreaſe the Church's glory upon earth. But by needleſs Schiſms and Factions, to weaken the common Intereſt of Reformed Chriſtianity, is to diſſipate the Church of God, and to defeat the great Ends of the Chriſtian Religion, which are, Sound and ſtrong Faith in Chriſt and his Promiſes, unfeigned devotion, purity of heart, innocence and integrity of life, common charity, brotherly love, humility, mutual forbearance, and condeſcention, unſhaken peace and concord.

As this Latitude promotes the great Deſigns of Chriſts Goſpel, ſo it ſettles this Nation, and is, for matter of Religion, its right and ſure Baſis. Every good Foundation, lyes adequate to the Building to be laid thereon: So any Polity Civil

Civil or Eccleſiaſtical, ſhould be proportionate to the people to be governed thereby. The people that are of moment in the Ballance of this Nation, are, though not univerſally, yet more generally rooted in *Proteſtantiſm*, as it is taken in its due latitude, and not as unduly reſtrained by the paſſions and intereſts of men: For in this they are one, though divided about leſſer things.

There hath been much diſcord between men of ſeveral Perſwaſions, that throughly accord with each other in the ſame common Faith, as almoſt to expunge one another out of the Liſt of *Proteſtants*. Surely this is a great error and a diſadvantage on all hands, as well to thoſe that ſtand on the Vantage-ground, as to others: For they that carry it after this ſort, do weaken the Common Intereſt of true Religion, and ſtrengthen the Common Adverſary that is irreconcilable, and diſparage themſelves as a narrow Party or Faction. That all thoſe who heartily embrace the *Engliſh Reformation* eſtabliſhed by Law, are Proteſtants, will not be queſtioned by men of temperate ſpirits. And concerning the reſidue, let the ſober-minded judge, Whether they that aſſent to the Doctrine of Faith contained in the Articles of the *Church of England*, and do worſhip God according to that Faith, have right to be eſteemed Proteſtants. Now if Proteſtancy taken in its due Extent, doth ſway the Nation, and is able to ſettle its Peace againſt the Competition of any *Rival*; ſhould it not be encompaſſed according to that Extent, as much as is poſſible, in the Polity of this State?

SECT.

SECT. XI.

How momentous in the Ballance of the Nation, those Protestants are, that dissent from the present Ecclesiastical Polity.

WHether cogent Reason speaks for this Latitude, be it now considered, *How momentous in the Ballance of this Nation, those Protestants are, which are dissatisfied in the present Ecclesiastical Polity.* They are every where spred through City and Countrey; they make no small part of all ranks and sorts of men; by Relations and Commerce they are so woven into the Nations Interest, that it is not easie to sever them, without unravelling the whole. They are not excluded from among the *Nobility*, among the *Gentry* they are not a few; but none are of more importance then they in the Trading part of the people, and those that live by Industry, upon whose hands the Business of the Nation lyes much. It hath been noted, that some who bear them no good will, have said, *That the very Air of Corporations is infected with their Contagion.* And in whatsoever degree they are, high or low, ordinarily for good understanding, steddiness and soberness, they are not inferior to others of the same Rank and Quality; neither do they want the Rational Courage of *English* Men.

As for the Ministers of this Perswasion, some have called them *Fools* for their *Inconformity*; others are reported to have said, *That the Church should not so easily be rid of them, as if their Conformity had been dreaded by them.* Some have pitied them, wishing *that they would Conform*; and others revile them, saying, *Conform, or not Conform, never trust them.* Howbeit, they make Solemn Appeals to the Most High God, *That they dare not Conform, for Con-*

Conſcience ſake; and *that it is not in the power of their own wills to relieve them.* And whatſoever their grounds of diſſent be, they hold it out againſt all hopes of Indulgence, whilſt many of them live in Neceſſities, and moſt of them upon the kindneſs of others.

It is now about Five years ſince a Full and Vigorous *Act of Uniformity*. at once cleared the Church of the ſuppoſed Enemies of her Polity. All Corporations have been New-model'd and changed as to the Principles and Tempers of perſons, for the better ſecuring of the Government in Church and State. The Private Meetings for Religious Worſhip (termed *Conventicles*) are ſtrictly prohibited, Deportation being the Penalty upon the Third Conviction. And for the breaking and diſſipating of the whole Party, it is provided by another Law, *That the Non-conforming Miniſters be removed five miles diſtant from the places of their uſual ſupports and influences.* Such care is taken, and ſuch is the advantage both of Law and Power, to ſtrengthen the State, and reſtrain Diſſenters. Nevertheleſs, the State *Eccleſiaſtical* hath advanced little in the eſteem, acceptance, or acquieſcence of people. The Diſſenters are ſtill the ſame, and are rather ſtrengthned in their averſneſs. And thoſe of them that repair to the publick Aſſemblies, retain their Principles of *Reformation* (as they ſpeak) without ſeperation. The *Indifferent* ſort of men are ſtill indifferent, and it may be have ſome kindneſs for the depreſſed Party, and pity them in their Sufferings.

SECT.

SECT. XII.

The Extirpation of the Dissenters is both difficult and unprofitable.

PEradventure some think their total Extirpation to be the surest way to publick Security and Peace; and that great Severities will do the work. But Violent compulsion and Terror, comports not with the nature of Christian Religion, which is a *Rational Service*, and seeks a *willing people*; and is not at all in truth, where it is not received with *judgment* and *free choice*.

Besides, the success of such a course may be doubted of, since the Protestant spirit is not like the Popish, Cruel and outragious; and the nature of *English* men is not bloody, but generously compassionate. Wherefore in this Land to execute Extremity upon an intelligent, sober, and peaceable sort of men, so numerous among all ranks, may prove exceeding difficult, unless it be executed by such Instruments as may strike terror into the whole Nation. The Civil Officers in general, may not be found so forward to afflict their quiet and harmless neighbours. Moreover, if severity used once for all, could extinguish an opposite party, there might be some plea of Policy; but when Severity must still be justified with more Severity, without an end, it is like to prove unlucky to the undertakers.

Nor is the Nation like to grow the better by the subversion of this sort, if it were effected. For in them no small part of the Nations Sobriety, Frugality, and Industry doth reside. They are not the *Great Wasters*, but mostly in the number of *Getters*. In most places the displaceing of them hath not encreased Civility and good Conversation among men; and it makes not for their dishonour, that many will swear and be drunk, to declare they are none of them.

There is something of more importance. To purge the Nation of this people, may be to purge out more of its Vitals, then the strength of this State can bear. To suppress those that are reckoned among the chief in Trading, and whose Commerce is so general, may beget a general diffidence and insecurity in Traders, and may help to drive away Trade it self, and send it to an emulous and encroaching Nation. May we mind, without offence, the event of things among us? The business of the Nation hath not proceeded with the current and free passage expected; nor doth its Wealth and Glory encrease. Trade languisheth, and Traders fail in great Numbers; the Rents of Lands fall; there is scarcity of Money in City and Country; the Necessities and Difficulties of private Estates are common, and Complainings are general. And after a continued decay, things are at last fallen and sunk much lower in the Ruins of the City of *LONDON*. 'Tis the Nations happiness to be re-established upon the Ancient, Legal Foundations; but it is the right stating and pursuing of its true Interest; by which it comes to a firm consistency, and proportionable growth.

But this sort of men are inquisitive, and therefore troublesome to Rulers, to whom Obedience without disputing, is most acceptable. It is fit indeed they be as humble and modest, as inquisitive. Yet these inquiring men stand much by that main Principle of *Protestantism*, the *Judgment of Discretion*. Indeed, the Churches Infallibility, and the peoples implicite Faith, may help against all Disputes: but it cannot be so in *England*, whilst the people read the Scriptures, and the established Doctrine of Faith remains with us: And if no greater latitude can be allowed, then is at present, a Race of *Non-conformists* is like to run parallel with the *Conformists* to the worlds end.

SECT.

SECT. XIII.

The representation of this Difficulty, is no Threatning to Rulers, or Intimation of Rebellion.

SUch as take this Representation for a Challenge to the Higher Powers, and a Demand of LIBERTY, and a Threatning, if it be not granted, are too far transported with Passion. What can be of greater concernment to Governors, then to discern and consider the state of their people, as it is indeed? And why may it not be minded by Subjects, and spoken of without any hint or thought of Rebellion? If Subjects use Arguments of Equity and Safety to Princes, it doth not presently speak a Demand: And it is no Threatning to say, *That Rulers themselves must be ruled by Reason, or do worse.*

The truth is, should they whose Case is here argued, upon this score meditate Rebellion and Warr, they were abandoned of their own Reason, and would hurry themselves into a precipice of manifest Ruin. To rush into ways of violence, evidently destroys their Interest, which stands in maintaining such works, and providing such things as are profitable to the Commonwealth; that it may be known that the publike good consists by them, as much as by others. To abide in their stations, to have patience under grievances, to sweeten their Governors by humility and modesty, is their best security, who stand or fall together with the true Interest of the Nation.

Nevertheless, though a peoples discomposure doth not forespeak *Warrs* and *Tumults*, yet it may denounce *Woe* and *Misery*. Can nothing undo a Kingdom, but *Rebellion* and *Treason*? Was there ever a greater Separation from the Church of *England*, then now is? Was there ever less satisfaction among Multitudes every where, that

do yet frequent her Assemblies? A State, that is free from violent Convulsive motions, may fall into a *Paralytick*, or *Hectick* Distemper, or an *Atrophy*. The Current of Vital Blood may be stopt in its Veins. There be sullen Mutinies, that make no noise, but may loosen all the Joynts and Ligaments of Policy.

SECT. XIV.

The Setling of the Nation by an Establisht Order, a Toleration, *and a* Connivence.

IF the Interest both of Reformed Christianity, and of this Kingdom, require a more comprehensive state of Religion, the true Extent of that State will be no impertinent or unmeet Inquiry. Such is the complicated condition of Humane Affairs, that it is exceeding difficult to devise a Rule or Model that shall provide for all whom Equity will plead for. Therefore the Prudent and Sober will acquiesce in any Constitution that is in some good sort proportionable to the Ends of Government. All that are thought fit to abide with security in any state, may be reduced to Three sorts: First, Those that are of the Establisht and Approved Order. 2. Such as may be Tolerated under certain Restrictions. 3. Such as may be only connived at. And accordingly the Setling of a Nation may be made up of an *Establishment*, a *Limited Toleration*, and a *Discreet Connivence*. To be comprehended within the *Establishment*, it is requisite not only to be of importance in the Publick Interest, but also of Principles congruous to such stated Order in the Church, as the stability of the Commonwealth requires. As for the two later, *Toleration* and *Connivence*, they must be regulated with respect not only to common Charity, but also to the Safety of the Establisht Order.

SECT

SECT. XV.

Of the Eſtabliſhed Order in RELIGION, and the Moderation therein required.

AS for the *Eſtabliſhed Order*, we preſume not here to intermeddle with the Form or Species of Church-Government; but only to conſider the preſcribed Uniformity of Judgment and Practice. Evident reaſon ſpeaks, That this be not narrow, but as broad and comprehenſive as it is poſſible, that of it ſelf, by its own force, it may be chief in ſway, and controle all diſſenting parties. On the other hand, it muſt not be looſe and incoherent, but well compacted, that it may attain the Ends of Diſcipline, which are to promote ſound Doctrine, and godly life, and to keep out Idolatry, Superſtition, and all wicked Error and Practice that tends to the defeating of the Power of Chriſtian Verity, Now theſe Ends do not require a Conſtitution of narrower bounds, then things neceſſary to Chriſtian Faith and Life, and godly Order in the Church. Theſe things muſt be maintained, and clearly ſtated; but whatſoever is more then theſe, may be matter of good intention and devotion to ſome, but an occaſion of ſtumbling to others.

If it be ſaid, *Who ſhall judg what things are neceſſary?* This doubt might ſoon be reſolved, if paſſion, and prejudice, and private ends were vanquiſhed. But however, let it be put to the Reaſon and Conſcience of the Church of *England*: Why ſhould not the great things of Chriſtianity in the hands of wiſe Builders, be a ſufficient Foundation of Church-Unity and Concord? What need hath the Church to enjoyn more then what is neceſſary to Faith and Order? Is not Moderation and Charity far more excellent, then glorying in Opinions, Formalities, and petty matters, to the regret of many Conſciences? What if thoſe that queſtion

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her Injunctions, ſhould be weak, nice and captious? It is about matters of Divine Worſhip, wherein God hath proclaimed his Jealouſie; and therefore if they being over-jealous, do erre, they deſerve pity.

Our Eccleaſiaſtical Superiors are here earneſtly beſought, Calmly and ſeriouſly to review the preſcribed Uniformity, and to conſider how ſome parts thereof, which at the beſt are but things indifferent, have been long diſputed, and by what manner of men, and what hath been argued for and againſt them; and how this Difference hath held, and ſtill encreaſed, from Biſhop *Hooper* in King *Edward*'s time, to the preſent *Non-conformiſts*; and then to judg whether a rational and conſcientious man may not poſſibly diſſent from ſome of theſe things, or at leaſt doubt of their Lawfulneſs; and in caſe of ſuch diſſenting or doubting, what he ſhould do, ſeeing the Apoſtle ſaith in the caſe of Meats, *He that doubts, is damned if he eat, becauſe he eateth not of faith.* Can a man by Subſcription and Practice, allow thoſe things which his Conſcience rationally doubts to be ſinful?

It is Honour and Power enough for the Church, to be enabled by her Authority to inforce Gods Commandments. She is obſerved and honoured as a Mother indeed, when by her Wiſdom and Care, her Children walk orderly according to the Chriſtian Inſtitution; and it may ſuffice her to chaſtiſe thoſe of them that walk contrary to Chriſt. Though ſhe be of *venerable Authority*; yet ſhe doth not claim an *Infallibility*; and therefore ſhe cannot ſettle the Conſcience by her ſole Warrant, but ſtill leaves room for doubting. And in preſcribed Forms and Rites of Religion, the Conſcience that doth its office, will inevitably interpoſe and concern it ſelf; and it being unſatisfied, jarrs and rents will follow. Woful Experience cryes unto us, *No more of ſuch Injunctions then needs muſt.*

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The indisputable Truths of Faith, and the indispensable Duties of Life, are the main object of Church-Discipline; therefore an ill choice is made when the vigor of Discipline is exercised about lesser and more dispensable things of meer Humane Determination.

The Sons of the Church of *England* commend the Moderation used in the Articles of Religion, being formed in words of that extent, that men of different Perswasions about the Doctrines of *Predestination*, *Divine Grace*, and *Free-will*, did alike subscribe them. Nevertheless, the present *Orders* and *Ceremonies* inexorably imposed, have been as much disputed among the Godly Learned, as those different Opinions about the Doctrines aforesaid; and yet who can think they are of as much importance to the Substance of Religion?

Moreover, men might more easily agree in the use of these little things, or of some of them, were their Internal Judgments spared, and Subscriptions not injoyned. They may bear with others in the practice of some things, which themselves cannot practice. They may submit to some things, which they cannot approve; and that not for unworthy Ends, but for Conscience sake; and chuse rather to acquiesce in a *Tolerable State*, which for the main is sound and good, rather then to endeavour a total Change, which may be mischievous, and at best is full of hazard. Wise men know, That by hasty Changes they do not come to rest and quietness, but only change their Old Grievances for New ones. If Practice sufficiently uniform, that is to say, without any scandalous difference, may be obtained from men of different Perswasions, Why should Uniformity of Judgment be exalted, and men tempted in doubtful points, to set their Consciences on the Rack? If any number of Dissenters were willing to do their uttermost towards Compliance, why should

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needleſs Choak-pears, which they could not ſwallow, be forc'd upon them? If the Church's Authority be had in reverence, if Order and Peace be kept, what matter is it from what ſpeculative Principles ſuch obſervance proceeds? Though a man ſo complying, be not of the ſame mind with his Superiors, yet he may have this honeſt Catholick Principle, To promote the common Intereſt of Reformed Chriſtianity, and to dread the weakning and ſhattering of it by needleſs Schiſms. As for a narrow-bounded Uniformity both in Opinions, and petty Obſervations, it is no more neceſſary in the Church, then Uniformity of Complexions and Viſages in the ſame Civil State; and is indeed no more attainable, where a generous Freedom of Judgment is allowed.

SECT. XVI.

Whether the Diſſenters are capable of being brought into ſuch a Comprehenſion.

WHilſt Reaſon is urged on their behalf that are left without the lines of the preſent Eſtabliſhment, ſome haply may ask, *Will they themſelves hearken to reaſon?* Be it ſuppoſed that ſome among them ſeem not reducible to a due publick Order; but another ſort there are, and thoſe of chiefeſt moment, whoſe principles are fit for Government; the ſtability whereof hath been experimented in thoſe Countreys where they have had the effectual concurrence of the Civil Powers. Their Way never yet obtained in *England*, nor were they ever favoured with the Magiſtrates vigorous aid, ſo much as for an Accommodation with the Eſtabliſhed Polity: But their difficulties have ſtill encreaſed; and how ſtreight ſoever the Terms impoſed on them, were in times before, the after-times have ſtill made them ſtreighter. Wherefore

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if they have been too much addicted to their own Opinions, or have committed some errors in the management of their Affairs, it is no marvel. It was not easie for them, being destitute of the Magistrates influence, and lying under great discouragement and disadvantage, always to keep stable and sure footing in such a slippery place as Church-Discipline. The asserting of their Discipline, is not here intended; but the Inquiry is, *Whether they be of a Judgment and Temper that makes them capable of being brought under the Magistrates Paternal Care and Conduct, to such a stated Order as will comport with this Church and Kingdom?*

This is no undertaking Discourse, it presumes only to offer its Reason to equal and impartial *Readers*. When a Divine of great fame, and of much esteem with the chiefest of the *English* Clergy, was taxed by the Jesuit his Adversary, for being no *Protestant*, as refusing to subscribe the Nine and thirty Articles; he judged it a sufficient Answer to testifie his belief, *That the Doctrine of this Church was so pure and holy, that whosoever lived according to it, should undoubtedly be saved; & that there was nothing in it that might give just cause to any to forsake the Communion, or disturb the Peace thereof.* Who, or what is there almost, that this or the like Latitude would not encompass, when hearty endeavours are put forth to gain men? The same Catholick Spirit may dwell both in larger and stricter judgments. One that cannot subscribe to all things contained in a Volume of Doctrines and Rules compiled by men subject to error, may be ready to joyn with any Church not depraved in the substance of Religion, that doth not impose upon his belief or practice, things unsound or doubtful, as the terms of her Communion.

The *Presbyterians* generally hold the *Church of England* to be a true Church, though defective in its Order and Discipline; and frequent the Worship of God in the pub-

like Assemblies. And many of those that press earnestly after further Reformation, do yet communicate as well in the Sacraments, as the Word Preached, and Prayer. And a way might be opened for many more to do as much, by a safe and easie condescention of those in Authority.

The Ministers of the *Presbyterian* Perswasion, in their Propolals presented to His Majesty, declare, That they do not, nor ever did renounce the true Ancient Primitive *Episcopacy*, or Presidency, as it was ballanced or managed by a due commixtion of *Presbyters* therewith. That they are satisfied in their judgments concerning the Lawfulness of a Liturgy or Form of Worship; and they Petition His Majesty, That for the setling of the Church in Unity and Peace, some Learned, Godly, and Moderate Divines, indifferently chosen, may be employed to compile a Form, as much as may be, in Scripture-words; or at least to Revise, and effectually Reform the Old. Concerning Ceremonies, they profess to hold themselves obliged in every part of Divine Worship, to do all things decently and in order; and to be willing therein to be determined by Authority, in such things as being meerly circumstantial, are common to humane actions, and are to be ordered by the Light of Nature, and Humane Prudence, according to the general Rules of Gods Word. But as for divers Ceremonies formerly retained in the Church of *England*, in as much as they contribute nothing to the necessary decency which the Apostle required, and draw too near the significancy and moral efficacy of Sacraments, and have been rejected together with Popery, by many of the Reformed Churches abroad, and ever since the Reformation, have been matter of endless Dispute in this Church, and an occasion of great seperation, and are at the best, indifferent, and in their own nature mutable, they desire they be not imposed; and they heartily acknowledg his Majesty

sty to be Supreme Governour over all Persons, and over all Things and Causes in these his Dominions.

Upon these Proposals, His Majesty in His Declaration concerning Ecclesiastical Affairs, hath thus graciously expressed himself: "We must for the Honour of all those of "either Perswasion, with whom We have conferred, de-"clare, That the Professions and Desires for the advance-"ment of true Piety and Godliness, are the same; their "professions of Zeal for the Peace of the Church, the "same; of Affection and Duty to Us, the same. They all "approve Episcopacy; they all approve a set-form of Li-"turgy; and they all disapprove and dislike the sin of Sa-"criledg and Alienation of the Revenues of the Church. "And if upon these Excellent Foundations, in submission "to which there is such a harmony of Affections, any Su-"perstructure should be raised to the shaking of these "Foundations, or the contracting and lessening of the "blessed gift of Charity, which is a vital part of Chri-"stian Religion, We shall think our selves very unfortu-"nate, and even suspect that We are defective in that Ad-"ministration of Government with which God hath intrust-"ed Us.

After these things, the Ministers commissioned for the Review of the Liturgy, in their account of that Business, thus address themselves to His Majesty: "Though the "Reverend Bishops have not had time to consider of our "Additions to the Liturgy, and of our Reply; We hum-"bly crave that it may be considered before a Determi-"nation be made. Though we seem to have laboured in "vain, we shall lay this Work of Reconciliation at Your "Majesties feet. We must believe, that when Your Ma-"jesty took our Consent to a Liturgy to be a Foundati-"on, that would infer our Concord; You meant not, that "we should have no Concord, but by consenting to this

"Liturgy without any conſiderable Alterations. And "when Your Majeſty commanded us by Letters Patents, "to meet about ſuch Alterations as were needful, or expe- "dient to give ſatisfaction to tender Conſciences, and "the reſtoring and continuing of Peace and Unity; We "reſt aſſured it was not Your Majeſties ſenſe that thoſe "tender Conſciences ſhould be forced to practice all which "they judg unlawful, or not ſo much as a Ceremony "ſhould be abated them; or that our Treaty was only "to convert either party to the Opinion of another; and "that all our hopes of Liberty and Concord, conſiſted "only in diſputing the Biſhops into *Non-conformity*, or "coming in every Ceremony to their mind.

This is the Church's miſery, That when any particular Intereſt grows in Proſperity and Power, and can carry all before it, Condeſcention preſently ceaſeth on that ſide. And ſo the diſagreeing parties in the ſeveral viciſſitudes of Publick Affairs, tread down one another, and juſtifie themſelves by the like miſcarriages of their Oppoſites when time was. By this means the Church's diſtempers and breaches are perpetuated, and Religion in general ſuffers much damage and ſcorn. But it would be the glory of that party that ſtands on the Vantage-ground, to give a leading Example of unconſtrained Moderation.

SECT. XVII.

Acquieſcence in the Widened Eſtabliſhment, is the Safety of Religion.

IF it be ſaid, That a little yeelding doth but make way for further Incroachments; we ſuppoſe that Governors know how far to truſt, and what it is fit to grant, if ſubjects know not what is fit for them to ask. Perſons allowed in the Publick Service, may eaſily be kept in

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that dependance on the State, which shall prevent the danger of an *Anti-Clergy*. We suppose likewise, that a sound Church-Government is not so weak and tottering, that the Abatement of some Rigors in things at best but indifferent, will hazard its overturning.

The wiser sort of Dissenters, whose Conformity, were they gained, would most avail, are weary of these strifes, and consider what is passable in the state of *England*, and might settle this Church. They dread the Consequents of Changes, the hurrying into other Extreams, and the wild excursions of some spirits. They would not be left again to the late uncertainty, and continual Vacillations in Government; and they have long since seen the manifold Errors committed in the Policy of the late times. They know that such unfixed Liberty would not secure them. And therefore it may well be thought, they would accept reasonable terms, and rest satisfied therein.

But this Consideration is taken by the wrong Handle, if this sober and steddy part of the *Non-conformists* be slighted and judged the less considerable, because they are cast into one condition as to the Law, with others that are of more unmanageable and unstable Principles. For who can tell how time may work out things, and frame the Spirits of the unsober to a greater soberness, and dispose them to a better consistency among themselves? But howsoever, can it make for the Publick Weal, That the more discreet and moderate sort, that might easily be brought in, should be inforced to continue the chief reputation and strength of a divided Party?

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SECT. XVIII.

Of Toleration *and* Connivence.

LET Impartial Reason judg, Whether a swaying, or at least a momentous part of those that close not with the present state Ecclesiastical, may not be incompassed in an Establishment of such a latitude, as may happily settle this Church, and consequently promote the Peace, Wealth and Honour of the Civil State.

As for others that are of sound Belief, and good Life, yet have taken in some Principles of Church-Government less congruous to National Settlement, I would never be a means of exposing them to Oppression, Contempt and Hatred, but would admit their Plea, as far as it will go. For if God hath received them, why should their fellow-servants reject or afflict them causlesly? Every true Christian should be tender of all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

Nevertheless, their Liberty pleaded for, is not to be inordinate, but measured and limited by the safety of true Religion in general, and of the publick Established Order; which is not unpracticable: For the world wants not an Experiment of the safety of a Toleration or Indulgence so regulated.

SECT. XIX.

Dissenters of Narrow and Rigid Principles, advised to Moderation.

AS Authority may be too prone to err in the Severity of Imposing; so Subjects may be too wilful in refusing to obey. As an explicit Assent, and Approbation, may by Superiors be too rigidly exacted in doubtful things;

things; so the unreasonable stiffness and harshness of Inferiors, may keep them from that compliance in practice, which their Conscience (becalm'd from Passion and Prejudice) would not gainsay. A servile, fawning, temporizing Spirit, is vile enough; but that which is sedate, castigate, and subdued to Reason, is not only pleasing to Governours, but also of great avail for Publick Peace.

Every Christian should be deeply sensible of the common Interest of Reformed Christianity, which is incomparably more valuable then those private Opinions, and little narrow Models, which may have much of his fancy and affection. Well-minded persons may easily be deceived touching their private Sentiments in Religion. They may think they are under the uncontrolable Sway of Conscience, when indeed they are but bound up by Custom, Education, Complexion, or some other kind of Prejudice. For ones own sake, one would gladly be rid of such Confinements, and walk more at liberty: But much more should one strive to be as comprehensive as may be, for the common safety, and advancement of true Religion, which cannot stand by such uncertainty and multiplicity of petty forms, but requires an ample and well-setled state, to defend and propagate it against the amplitude and potency of the *Romish* Interest. The prudent and sober should not easily settle upon such Opinions in Church-Order, as will never settle the Nation, but tend rather to infinite perplexity and discomposure.

Howsoever, I will not bear too hard upon any thing that may fairly pretend to Conscience, which, though erroneous, should not be harshly dealt with. Nevertheless, if (when all is said) some dissatisfaction doth invincibly possess the Judgment, in that case Christian Humility and Charity, as well as Discretion, adviseth such persons to acquiesce in their private Security and Freedom, and not

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to reach after that Liberty that may unsettle the Publick Order, and undermine the Common Safety.

SECT. XX.

This Comprehensive State of Religion further considered, with respect to Three important Interests: First to that of the KING.

FOR the removing of all conceived Prejudices, let this desired Latitude of Religion, be considered with respect to the several Interests of the King, of the Church and Clergy, and of the Nobility and Gentry. First let it be examined in reference to the Interest of Regal Majesty.

The *Non-conformists*, and others inclinable to their way, are by some charged with such Principles as detract much from Kingly Power and Dignity, and tend to advance Popular Faction. It is confessed, they have been eager Assertors of Legal Liberties; yet herein they were not singular, but in almost all PARLIAMENTS have had the concurrence of many good Patriots that were not touch'd with the least tincture of *Puritanism*. They profess much affection to MONARCHY, and the Royal Family; and think they have made it appear by their hazardous declaring against the designed Death of our late Soveraign, and their vigorous Actings for the Restitution of His Majesty that now is. They are so well satisfied, as none more, in the Ancient Fundamental Constitution of this Kingdom.

This Arraignment of their supposed Principles about Government, may haply proceed upon Mistake. There is reason enough to think, That the many late Disputes about Prerogative and Liberty, are *Controversiæ ortæ non primæ*, that they had their rise from something else, which lyes at the bottom. Both former and present times do

do shew, That the *Anti-Puritan* Interest, when occasion serves, and the urgency of Affairs requires, can contest with Princes, and pretend Conscience too, in crossing their Designs. Inclinations and Interests, more then Speculative Opinions, will be found to have born the sway, and caused those active motions on the one hand, and the other. These *Dogmata* or Problemes about Obedience and Government, do but little, where mens Affections and Concernments do not give them spirit and vigor. The practical Judgment of Inferiors, hath a bias in this case, according to their Superiors Benignity or Asperity towards them. High strains of speech may easily proceed from such as flatter their Governors, or know not themselves; but they are worthy of credit, that speak credible things.

The wise man saith, *He that repeateth a matter, separateth very friends.* A looking back to former discords, marrs the most hopeful Redintegration. Acts of Indempnity, are Acts of Oblivion also, and must be so observed. Let not the way of Peace be barr'd by the framing of such Tests as may perplex the minds of men, but add no real security to the Higher Powers. For as some set their wits a work in framing, so do others in evading the designs of such Engagements. And of those that devise how to evade them, some may deal seriously, and others perhaps may trifle with Conscience; but the internal Judgments of both remain what they were before. The common Evasions or Violations of such bonds among all parties in our times, do shew, That they are not the way to root out inveterate Opinions. But there is a surer way to obviate the evil tendency of such Opinions, and to render them ineffectual. For it is not this or that narrow conception or notion, but some greater thing, that rules the actions of humane life. The condition of the dissatisfied, may without damage, or just scandal to any, be made such, That their far greater

number ſhall not long for changes, but gladly embrace preſent things; and then the implacably evil-minded would want matter to work upon, and reſt without hope of diſturbing the Publick Peace.

Moreover, all Loyal Principles are not incloſed in ſome Poſitions, in which may be much variety and uncertainty of opinion, and in which both Theological and Political Caſuiſts (and they great Aſſertors of Monarchical Government) have written doubtfully. Men of different apprehenſions in ſuch things, may be indued with the ſame prudence, ſoberneſs, common charity, love of Publick Tranquility, reverence of Regal Majeſty, conſcience of Allegiance, and an awful regard of Divine and Humane Laws. Men of nicer Judgments, may have as loyal hearts as thoſe of greater latitude. And why ſhould the judgments of ſuch men be rack'd, and their ſpirits vexed with curious ſcrutinies? The ancient Sacred Bonds of Fidelity, are not queſtioned; and if they do not, what others can oblige and awe the Conſcience?

The extent of Prerogatives Royal, of the Priviledges of PARLIAMENTS, and of the Peoples Immunities, is not matter fit for common diſquiſition, but requires to be kept among the Secrets of Government. It might have been far better, if theſe points had been more gently and warily handled on all ſides. The *Engliſh* (in general) are an ingenuous and open-hearted people; and if unlucky accidents diſcompoſe them not, they are of themſelves diſpoſed to have their Kings in great veneration; and doubtleſs their ſatisfaction and good eſtate, is their Soveraigns true repoſe.

SECT.

SECT. XXI.

Secondly, *To the Intereſt of the Church and Clergy.*

IN the next place, let this Comprehenſive ſtate be examined, with reſpect to the Intereſt of the *Church of England*. The Doctrine of Faith and Sacraments by Law eſtabliſhed, is heartily received by the *Non-conformiſts*, and it is like to be the Baſis of their ſtanding in *England*, as long as Proteſtant Religion ſtands. How far they approve *Epiſcopacy* and *Liturgy*, hath been above declared. Their diſſent is in ſome parts of Divine Worſhip (as they ſay) not appointed of God, but deviſed by men; alſo in the frame of the *Engliſh Hierarchy*, as it differs from the Ancient Epiſcopacy; and they avow they are under no obligation to extirpate or impeach that ancient Form. The Miniſters of this Perſwaſion are Godly and Learned, able and apt to teach the people; and no ſmall part of the Congregations in *England* feel the loſs of them. Doth the Lord of the Harveſt command that ſuch Labourers be thruſt out of his Service? And will the chief Shepherd at his appearing juſtifie this uſage of his faithful Servants?

The Biſhops and dignified Clergy, and thoſe of their Perſwaſion, have the advantage of Law and Power. But can they believe that the Church of God in theſe Nations, is terminated in them alone? It is hoped that Chriſt hath a larger Intereſt in theſe Realms. Shall it be ſaid of the *Engliſh Prelacy*, That it cannot ſtand without the ejection of Thouſands of Orthodox, Pious Miniſters? Or that it dreads a general diffuſion of knowledg in the people? Or that this is a Maxime thereof, *No Ceremony, no Biſhop*; as if the Biſhop's work were at an end, and his office of no force, if Ceremonies were left indifferent? Is an Eccleſiaſtical Government, that pleads Apoſtolical Inſtituti-

on, and Universal reception, so weak and feeble, that godly and peaceable men, preaching only the indubitable truths of Christianity, would undermine it? If any should preach what is Schismatical and Seditious, they are liable to Restraints and Censures, according to their demerits. Why will the established Clergy refuse their Brethren, and set them at such a distance? Is it their honour, strength, or safety, that such men should be numbred among their opposites?

The intrinsick and permanent State of *Prelacy*, is not advanced by these present Rigors. It is not more rooted in the hearts of people, nor are many gained over that would stick close to it in a time of tryal. The dread, that is of its Censures, ariseth from the subsequent temporal Penalties. And however it be, its Chariot drives but heavily. It cannot measure its strength by the number of *Conformists*, among whom there are many that are a reproach unto it, and many that are very indifferent men; and there are the *Latitudinarians*, that are accounted but luke-warm *Conformists*; and many that submit, may not like the imposing; and men may think divers Injunctions (that are not simply unlawful) to be burdensome and inconvenient, and would be glad to shake off the yoke. A great Prelate before the late Warrs, is reported to say, *That the Conforming Puritan was the Devil of the Times.* And of those that zealously affect the established Order, there are not a few that disgust the behaviour of Church-men, and are ready to upbraid them with the known moderation of many whom they have ejected; yea, the more considerate Sons of the Church, do observe and bewail such dangerous miscarriages by *Simony*, *Pluralities*, *Non-residency*, and *Profaneness*, as threaten a second downfall. The world takes notice what men are cast out; and what is the condition of multitudes that are retained in the Service of the Church.

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There are a sort of men of great Worth and Reputation in the several Orders of this Kingdom, that indeed affect Episcopacy, but see the inconvenience and danger of this Severity, and would have things carried with Discretion and Equity, and are ready to do good offices for the depressed Party. If the Affairs of the Commonwealth should go backwards, can the Clergy alone be at rest in their Honour, Power and Wealth? Though of later times it hath been said, *No Bishop, no King*; yet it is not evident, That the present frame of Prelacy hath an immutable Interest in the Regal Name and Power.

The Religion of any State will sink, if it be not held up in its venerable Estimation among the people; and it cannot be long held in reverence, if it hath neither the reality, nor appearance of Devotion and Sanctity. That which is divested of the Disguises and Impostures of *Romish* Superstition, had need to be spirited with Life and Power. Minds touch'd with Devotion, will look either to the way of true and real Godliness, or to the Popish Bodily Exercise. It is here sincerely wish't, That the Clergy may hold their state in safety and honour; That they may never be laid low for want of meet Revenue or Dignity; That they may always preserve a reverend esteem of their Persons and Office. But then the Bishops must not be the Head of such Ministers, as for ignorance and lewdness are a scandal and scorn to their Neighbours; nor of such as incourage profaneness, and deprave seriousness and diligence in Religion and strictness of life, under the scandal of *Puritanism*, *Fanaticism*, or such like names of reproach. They must so manage their Government, that under it the sound knowledg of God may encrease through the Land; that holiness and righteousness may flourish; that their influence may dispose men to do those things that are honest, and pure, and comely, and vertuous, and praise-worthy. To this may be added the setling

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of the Church in a due extent, that it may incompass so much as may enable it to vanquish whatsoever is inconsistent with it; and to keep within compass whatsoever may be tollerated under it.

The great danger and damage which may be dreaded to ensue this moderation, (which nevertheless may possibly not ensue it) is but the cutting off some Luxuriances from some in the Highest Order; or the sharing among many what was ingrossed by a few. And the Church doth not change for the worse, if some diminution of greatness in a very few persons makes way for a more general amplitude, stability and peace; and the Clergy enjoy an Estate of Power, Plenty and Honour, with less envy and hazard of undermining.

SECT. XXII.

Thirdly, *To the Interest of the Nobility and Gentry.*

THere is another Interest, that of the *Nobility* and *Gentry*, which is worthy of regard in this Inquiry. The Latitude and Liberty here discoursed, is thought to give too great advantage to the *Citizens* and the *Commonalty*; as also to make all sorts more knowing, and less servile; and consequently, less obsequious to the wills of great men. And the doubt is, whether the Nobles and Gentlemen of *England* can maintain their Authority and Splendor, with the Freedom of Citizens and the common people. Surely in the times of their Ancestors they were in as much splendor and power, as they have been in the memory of this Age; and yet in those times both Citizens and Yeomanry were rich and free, brave and worthy in their own rank. And it may be the higher Degrees in *England* would never be so advanced, as some have conceited, if the meaner sort were reduced to the condition of the *French* Peasantry. For there is another Spirit in the *English* People, which peradventure may

may not be vanquished at less charges then dissipation of the strength and riches, and all the glory of this Land. Besides, Trade which is the Life of *England*, must be managed by a people not of a slavish and sordid condition. And in a Trading Nation, things do so pass to and fro, and run from one hand to another, that New Men by their Wealth will be always getting up into the rank of Gentlemen, and former Gentile Families will be decaying. There is a Liberty for every Native to purchase Lands; and though some of our Tenures began in the Vassalage of meaner men to great ones, yet they are now by custom of later Ages, become so far free, that they are fit for any ingenuous persons to take them up. Moreover, the *Englisb* Gentry are Commons, according to the main frame of this Polity; and that great Convention where they meet in their chiefest Power, is the *Commons House of Parliament*, in which they represent the universality of the Commons of all Counties, and Cities, and Burroughs: And therefore the free Estate of the Commons, is the true Interest of Gentlemen. And how groundless and fruitless is all evil emulation between the Gentry and Citizens, or Traders! For they mutually uphold each other, or both must fall to the ground. Many Gentile Families are the Off-spring of former Citizens; and many Citizens are the sons of Gentlemen. And when the Estates of ancient Gentry are sinking, their Marriage with Citizens is an ordinary means of underpropping them. And if Traders fail, the Revenue of the Gentry must fail also; whose Lands did never bear that Price, nor yeeld that Annual Rent that of late they have done, till the Nation became great in Foreign Trade. If emulation of Gallantry be any matter of grudg between them, the Citizens may leave the Gentry to their own Garbs, and retain a grave habit to themselves, in which they may sufficiently express their Wealth, as their Predecessors did before them. For it is

generous

generous so to do. And as for the Nobility and Gentry, their Honour lyes in upholding their Families, and bearing sway in their Countries; and they do the one by discreet and liberal Frugality; and the other by having and using greater Abilities then the vulgar, for their Countries Service.

SECT. XXIII.

The general Security that comes by this Latitude.

THE chief Prejudices have been considered; and these three Important Interests being known aright, are found not to oppose, but to require this Latitude of Religion. Furthermore, our common Security and Freedom, earnestly perswades it: For the Severities of Law against Dissenters, may at length come home to them or theirs, who take themselves to be far out of the reach thereof. And the inforcing of those Penalties may need such ways and means, as may trouble them who are tender of the Lawful Rights and Liberties of *English*-men. But the Common Peace being once firmly setled in this Comprehensive state, all Necessity of Powers and Proceedings extraordinary, will disappear, and vanish away.

Finally, The more Pacifick we are at home, the more Powerful and Formidable shall we be abroad. But our Breaches are too well known, and make little for our Reputation or Advantage in Foreign parts. What can it avail, to disturb a People that would settle in peace, and whose Peace is accommodated to the Publick Weal, and bound up together with it? It must needs be fruitless and unfortunate, and cause perplexities and miscarriages in the chiefest Affairs of State. It is a saying of the wisest of Kings, *He that troubles his own House, shall inherit the wind.*

FINIS.